

Behind Nosenko's Defection— Nightmare of Double Deceit

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By Tom Lambert
Of The Herald Tribune Staff
WASHINGTON.

In the murky shadow world of the CIA and the KGB of the Deuxieme Bureau and MI-6, the defector is prized as one of the more valuable catches in espionage, especially if he is in the enemy's intelligence service, like Yuri I. Nosenko.

Nosenko, a 36-year-old officer in Russia's KGB secret police, espionage and counter espionage apparatus, defected to the United States last week in Switzerland.

The publicity about the defection violated some of the cardinal rules and traditions of espionage. First, the Soviets disclosed it. Second, the United States confirmed it. Why? Such defections ordinarily are not acknowledged by either country, eliciting only silence and counter silence.

Since he is believed to have been a double agent—working for American intelligence from within the secret KGB—Nosenko's defection probably began much earlier, when he first talked with some United States agent about abandoning Russia.

Barring the decision to defect, a soul-tearing move no matter what the motive, a defector's first tentative step to desert his country is one of the most nightmarish he makes.

The intrigue and the danger, the maneuverings and habards of Nosenko's first move may never be known. Did he approach an American and say he wanted to leave Russia? Or was he approached by an American, or perhaps another Russian or foreigner working for Amer-

ica, with the defection suggestion? Nobody is saying.

For a defector, the interim between his first contact with an enemy agent and defection is highly dangerous.

During that period, the defector first must prove his identity and his desire to defect. In offering to desert or betray his country, an act of consummate insincerity, he must prove, paradoxically, that he is sincere.

And he must avoid any suspicion by his own countrymen, while facing the possibility the necessarily-suspicious enemy operative with whom he is talking might be a double agent loyal to the country he wants to abandon or betray.

Defection stems from various causes. Sometimes it is hatred of country, or longing for another. Sometimes defections are prompted by domestic difficulties, or trouble with the authorities. And sometimes defection is induced by enemy offers of cash or position, or by blackmail. Some defectors' first contacts are astonishingly simple, others involved.

One snowy night in 1954, KGB officer Peter Deriabin walked into American Military Headquarters in Vienna and told two GIs on duty he wanted to see an Army counter-intelligence officer or a CIA agent.

A Russian-speaking American captain was summoned. Deriabin told him he wanted to defect. The captain asked him if he knew what he was doing and saying. Deriabin said yes. That was that.

That same year, a former vaudeville show whistler named Nikolai Khokhlov knocked on the door of

Georgi Okolovich's apartment in Frankfurt, West Germany.

Khokhlov identified himself as a Russian and told Okolovich, head of a Russian emigre organization, he had been assigned to murder him with a KGB-designed cigarette case-pistol. Khokhlov said he could not pull the trigger. Okolovich offered to put him in touch with some American intelligence agents.

SINCERITY

Shortly thereafter, Khokhlov was told to drive to a site near the Frankfurt Opera House, where an American entered his car and began to question him.

Khokhlov wrote later the American refused to believe his story, or that he wanted to defect. But he finally was able to convince that American, or others, that he was sincere.

Some first contacts are productive, others not.

The Nosenko case may fall into the first category.

But several years ago, KGB agents in Moscow contacted several Western correspondents with defection and espionage suggestions, only to be turned down.

And an American here once approached a friendly Russian military attache about to return to Moscow with a smiling hint the Soviet officer might like to stay in the United States. The Russian, also smiling, said "Nyet."

There is no indication how Bernon Mitchell and William Martin, United States National Security Agency employees, made their first contact with Soviet agents before defecting to the USSR in 1960.

Lee Oswald tried to defect to the Soviet Union in 1961, but later rehedged.

There are various types of defectors, some more valuable than others, depending on who is evaluating them. Thus, to American intelligence, Nosenko is a vastly more valuable defector than a ballet dancer like Rudolf Nureyev. And Mitchell and Martin obviously were far greater catches for the KGB than Lee Oswald.

tions, the most valuable baggage a defector can bring with him is information: data on weapons, defense plans, industry, scientific developments, foreign and domestic policy, the inner workings of his government.

CODES

From the intelligence standpoint, defecting espionage officers are most valuable of all. They know something about the intelligence system of their countries, names of spies, their locations and methods, current or planned espionage operations, codes, possibly the name of double agents working in the intelligence apparatus of the country to which they wish to defect. Information disclosed by a defecting espionage agent often can smatter his country's intelligence system and plans.

Often, intelligence agencies try to "turn" defecting espionage officer, to persuade them to go back on the job, but as double agents, called "defectors in place." Nothing pleases an intelligence director more completely than inserting a "defector in place" into an enemy espionage apparatus. The work they can do is obvious. The life must be hair-raising.

For defectors who do not remain "in place" but abandon their country, life is difficult. Defection means going to a new land, often leaving family behind. It means acquiring a new language, and sometimes a new identity. It often means months or years of silence and isolation, for not all defectors are "surfaced," or brought into the open. And it can mean continuing fear that the defector country's espionage agents will try to kill him.

The United States insures protection for its valuable defectors. Sometimes, as in the case of Deriabin and Khokhlov, they are allowed to write books.

Defectors to the Soviet Union sometimes are kept "submerged" for varying periods, then "surfaced" and given unimportant jobs. The Russians seem suspicious and

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